



## In brief: South Africa – Zuma set for a second term in 2014

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In December 2012, at the African National Congress (ANC) conference in [Mangaung](#), President [Jacob Zuma](#) was re-elected leader of the party. Vice-President Kgalema Motlanthe, who had launched a late challenge to Zuma's leadership, was replaced as deputy leader by [Cyril Ramaphosa](#), marking the latter's return to the centre of the political scene after 15 years of relative reticence. While the opposition Democratic Alliance has been making some progress in terms of building up its political credibility in recent years, and has attracted more non-white support in doing so, it has not yet made a breakthrough. This makes it virtually inevitable that Zuma and Ramaphosa will be South Africa's next President and Vice-President following national elections next year, which the ANC remain overwhelming favourites to win comfortably.

Views differ over which of Zuma or Ramaphosa got the better of a deal made by them just before the conference, in which Zuma reportedly agreed to gradually transfer power to Ramaphosa after the 2014 elections if Ramaphosa, previously no fan of Zuma's, backed him. Some doubt that Zuma will keep his side of the bargain. Zuma has managed to marginalise many of his critics while at the same time holding together the Tripartite Alliance between the ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Motlanthe remains Zuma's Vice-President for now, but is gravely weakened and heading for the political exit. The radical populist Julius Malema has been expelled from the ANC. Overall, Zuma's position looks stronger than it has been for quite some time. Critics who do not believe that he is the right man for the job hope that he might yet decide not to stand again in 2014, but the chances of that appear very slim.

The ANC is facing a new political challenger, [Mamphela Ramphele's](#) Agang South Africa (Agang is Sepedi for 'Let's Build'), which was launched in February. As the ex-partner of Steve Biko and a former World Bank official, some are hoping that a more effective opposition might coalesce around her. However, the ANC has so far been very successful in overcoming challengers from within the liberation struggle; she faces an [uphill task](#).

Nonetheless, all is far from entirely rosy for Zuma and the ANC. In recent years the ANC has been deeply divided over economic policy, damaged by mounting official corruption and faced with growing discontent from below over its alleged failure to deliver better public services, although 60% of the national budget does go on social spending. Inequality between rich and poor continues to rise, rather than fall; growth rates are not high enough to

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create sufficient jobs; some union leaderships are experiencing challenges from unhappy rank-and-file and the number of strikes in the mining and agricultural sectors, some of them 'wildcat', is on the increase. There has also been renewed concern over the past year or so about the undoubtedly high levels of violence within South African society, from sexual and gender-based violence to police brutality, as most shockingly illustrated by the 2012 massacre at the Lonmin platinum mine at Marikana, in which 34 striking miners were killed in circumstances currently being investigated by a (retired) judge-led commission of inquiry. ANC veteran Ronnie Kasrils recently condemned moves in South Africa towards "[police state depravity](#)" redolent to some of the apartheid era. Although nobody expects it to lose, there are worries internally that the ANC's vote-share could slide in 2014, further weakening its legitimacy. There is currently controversy about the future of the chair of the board of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Ben Ngubane. Ngubane has offered to resign following criticisms of the board for failing to stand up to growing political interference. Zuma is reported to be considering his offer.

On economic policy, the key schism within the ANC has been between those who favour a 'pro-market' approach (led by Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan) and those who want a more 'developmental state' approach (led by Economic Development Minister Ibrahim Patel and Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies, with support from the unions), with some of the latter also calling for the nationalisation of the mines. Zuma, a more conservative variety of populist, has always sought to float between (or above) the two camps. Ramaphosa, despite his union past, is now a very wealthy man – including through a directorship at Lonmin – and solidly in the 'pro-market' camp. At Mangaung, [efforts to make nationalisation the policy of the ANC were rejected](#) and the Department of Finance-supported National Development Plan was endorsed. But the underlying divisions remain.

An emboldened Zuma gave his State of the Nation address to Parliament on 14 February. Amongst the measures announced was the establishment of a youth employment support scheme and the abandonment of the much-criticised (on the grounds that it has held back redistribution to those whose land was taken away under white rule) 'willing seller, willing buyer' principle for land purchased for resettlement. It is being replaced by the principle of 'equitable compensation'. Zuma also warned grassroots protesters against corruption and poor services that the police will crack-down hard on any protests that turned to violence. Gordhan's budget on 27 February promised a big expansion of spending on education and infrastructure, but there remain doubts about the capacity of government at all levels to deliver on such promises.

#### **Further reading**

M. Wiemer and A. Vines, [UK-South Africa Relations and the Bilateral Forum](#), Chatham House, 2011

R. Dowden, [Lonmin-Marikana: the end of South Africa's post-apartheid settlement?](#), *African Arguments*, 20 August 2012

R. Rumney, [South Africa: cry the beloved cliché](#), *Guardian*, 22 October 2012

H. Wainwright, [Something rotten in the ANC state](#), *Open Democracy*, 14 December 2012

"South Africa: guns, jobs and strikes", *Africa Confidential*, 1 March 2013 (Available from the Library)

[Roots of the crisis facing the South African police](#), Institute of Strategic Studies, 7 March 2013

[Improving governance is key to ending violent protests in South Africa](#), Institute for Strategic Studies, 4 March 2013